

Washington AHAB Tsunami Siren Network Talking Points

Washington Emergency Management Division

Top-Level Messaging

- Washington state's tsunami siren network has been completed as of June 30th, 2021 with the installation of 50 new sirens in the last 2 years. There are now 122 sirens on the Washington coast, which are run and maintained by the state.
- Tsunami sirens are located along the outer and inner coasts in the highest risk communities to ensure the safety of coastal residents and visitors in the event of a tsunami.

Primary Messaging

- This network of all-hazards alert broadcast (AHAB) tsunami sirens provides an outdoor tsunami alerting method for people and communities on or near the beach who may not otherwise have access to other official alerting methods.
- The 50 sirens installed over the last two years fill key gaps in the state's tsunami siren network, ensuring the most high-risk waterfront areas of both the inner and outer coasts have coverage.
- Funding to complete the network was allocated by the Washington State Legislature in fiscal years 2020 and 2021. Without this critical legislative funding, completing the siren network would have taken another 20+ years.
- This life-saving project brought together state agencies, tribal, county, and city emergency management, and other important stakeholders to ensure Washington's coastal communities can be alerted in the event of a tsunami warning.
- The only method to guarantee safety from a tsunami is to get far enough inland or to high ground before the waves arrive, so receiving tsunami alerts in a timely manner is crucial.

Secondary Messaging

- Washington State has over 3,000 miles of coastline, all of which are at risk for tsunamis.
- \$2.7 million was allocated by the Washington State Legislature in FY2020 and FY2021. An additional \$150,000 in federal grant funding was allocated through the National Tsunami Hazard Mitigation Program.
- The AHAB tsunami sirens are physical, pole-mounted, modular sirens that alert those within range to danger by emitting a voice, tone, and intense blue light alert.
- The sirens have an audible range of approximately 1 mile, though this varies depending on environmental factors like topography, wind direction, and physical barriers such as trees and buildings. The pole-mounted voice/tone siren is also topped with a blue light for the hard of hearing.
- The sirens are not intended to be heard indoors. That's why it's important to be signed up for tsunami alerts and to have a NOAA weather radio receiver.
- The siren system is tested on the first Monday of every month at noon; the sirens play the Westminster Chimes followed by an audio message in English and Spanish.

- The sirens are also tested once a year with the actual tsunami warning wail sound on the third Thursday in October in conjunction with the Great Washington ShakeOut.
- If you hear the siren wailing sound outside of the Great Washington ShakeOut, immediately follow the closest tsunami evacuation route inland or to high ground. This is your warning that a tsunami is approaching, and you need to evacuate the inundation zone as soon as possible.
- If you are on the coast and you feel ground shaking, drop, cover, and hold on to protect yourself. When the shaking stops, immediately follow the closest tsunami evacuation route inland or to high ground. Do not wait to hear a tsunami siren or to receive an official tsunami alert – the shaking is your warning that a tsunami may be on its way.
- Washington faces two kinds of tsunami hazards: local source tsunamis and distant source tsunamis. A local source tsunami is triggered by a nearby earthquake, such as one along the Cascadia Subduction Zone. A distant source tsunami is generated by an earthquake elsewhere in the Pacific, such as Alaska or Japan. Because Washington will not experience ground shaking for a distant source tsunami, other alerting methods are vital. Tsunami sirens are used in such an event to alert people near the beach to evacuate, as people in these areas may not have access to alerts through TV, radio, or phone.

Resources

- Learn more about Washington's tsunami hazard at www.mil.wa.gov/tsunami.
- To see if there is a tsunami siren near you, look up your address on the Department of Natural Resources Geology Portal.
- To learn more and register for the 2021 Great Washington ShakeOut, check out <https://www.shakeout.org/washington/>.
- Learn how to sign up for tsunami alerts at <https://mil.wa.gov/alerts>.

New Sirens by County

The 50 new tsunami sirens have been installed at the following places:

- **CLALLAM COUNTY – 7 SIRENS**
 - o Makah Tribal Housing Area
 - o Makah Tribe, Hobuck Campground and RV Resort
 - o Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe, Blyn
 - o Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe, Dungeness
 - o San Juan Vista Community
 - o Sekiu, Mason's Olson Resort
 - o City of Port Angeles
- **WHATCOM COUNTY – 5 SIRENS**
 - o Lummi Nation, Sandy Point
 - o Lummi Nation, Lummi Bay Market
 - o Blaine, Semiahmoo Spit Marina
 - o Birch Bay State Park
 - o Fairhaven Historic District, Bellingham
- **GRAYS HARBOR COUNTY – 13 SIRENS**
 - o Shoalwater Bay Tribe, Tokeland
 - o City of Aberdeen, West Hunley Street
 - o City of Aberdeen, Bishop Athletic Complex

- o City of Aberdeen, Lafayette Street
 - o City Hoquiam, Queen Avenue
 - o Grayland Beach State Park
 - o Ocean City State Park
 - o Twin Harbors State Park
 - o City of Cosmopolis
 - o Ocean Shores, Central Water Reservoir
 - o Ocean Shores, Vacuum Pump Station #6
 - o Ocean Shores, Vacuum Pump Station #6
 - o City of Westport
- ISLAND COUNTY – 7 SIRENS
 - o Dugualla Bay, Whidbey Island
 - o Oak Harbor Marina, Whidbey Island
 - o Lagoon Point, Whidbey Island
 - o Iverson Beach, Camino Island
 - o Driftwood Shores, Camino Island
 - o West Beach Road, Oak Harbor
 - o Keystone, Driftwood County Park
- JEFFERSON COUNTY – 1 SIREN
 - o Port Townsend Marina
- PACIFIC COUNTY – 3 SIRENS
 - o Ilwaco Marina
 - o Long Beach Peninsula, Pacific Park, Cranberry Beach Road
 - o Long Beach Peninsula, Pacific Park, 145th Place
- SKAGIT COUNTY – 11 SIRENS
 - o Swinomish Tribe, Shelter Bay Marina
 - o Swinomish Tribe, Tribal Casino
 - o Swinomish Tribal Fish Company
 - o Samish Indian Nation, Fidalgo Bay Resort
 - o City of Anacortes Skate Park
 - o City of La Conner Fire Station
 - o City of Blanchard
 - o Samish Island Community Center
 - o City of Anacortes, Skyline Marina
 - o Edison Fire Station
 - o City of Anacortes, Treatment Plant
- SNOHOMISH COUNTY – 3 SIRENS
 - o Port of Everett Marina Park
 - o Port of Everett
 - o City of Edmonds